

MISSION OF THE  
UNITED STATES TO  
AUSTRALIA

IN THIS ISSUE:

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- How to spot an Internet Scam
- Upcoming Outreaches

**KEY CONTACTS**

**Canberra Embassy**

Please refer enquiries to  
Sydney

**Sydney Consulate**

SydneyACS@State.gov

**Melbourne Consulate**

MelbourneACS@State.gov

**Perth Consulate**

Perth ACS@State.gov

**Brisbane Virtual  
Consulate**

[http://brisbane.usvpp.gov/  
brisbane](http://brisbane.usvpp.gov/brisbane)

**Adelaide Virtual  
Consulate**

[http://adelaide.usvpp.gov/  
adelaide](http://adelaide.usvpp.gov/adelaide)



# Consul's Corner

CONSUL'S CORNER

APRIL, 2009

## Greetings from Melbourne...

Otto H. Westhassel, a New York City native, arrived in Melbourne, Australia, in February 2009 to take up duties as Vice Consul for Victoria, South Australia, Tasmania, and the Northern Territory. His responsibilities also include serving as the Visa Chief, Anti-Fraud Officer, and Training Officer.

Mr. Westhassel received his Bachelor of Arts in International Politics and Military Affairs from The Citadel in Charleston,

South Carolina, and is nearing completion of a Master of Science in Psychology from Capella University in Minnesota. Mr. Westhassel retired from the United States Marine Corps in June, 2005, after which he worked on Joint Service programs for more than three years. While in the Marine Corps, he served in Southwest Asia, Africa, and the Asia-Pacific regions.



## Tax Season is upon us!

Income tax season is upon us. Although you may not presently be earning any income in the U.S., U.S. law requires American citizens to file a tax return annually. The filing of a tax return does not auto-

matically mean that you must pay taxes; however, it does notify the IRS whether you do or do not owe taxes in the U.S. for that tax year.

*Story continued on Page 3...*

**UPCOMING U.S. & AUSTRALIAN PUBLIC HOLIDAYS****Holiday Listing**

- } April 10—Good Friday
- } April 13—Easter Monday
- } April 27—ANZAC Day (Perth & Canberra Only)
- } May 25—Memorial Day
- } June 1—Foundation Day (Perth Only)
- } June 8—Queen's Birthday (Canberra, Melbourne & Sydney Only)
- } July 3—Independence Day
- } September 7—Labor Day
- } September 28—Queen's Birthday (Perth Only)
- } October 5—Labour Day (Canberra & Sydney Only)
- } October 12—Columbus Day
- } November 3—Melbourne Cup Day (Melbourne Only)
- } November 3—Family & Community Day (Canberra Only)
- } November 11—Veterans Day
- } November 26—Thanksgiving Day

**APRIL 2009**

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	<b>10</b>	11
12	<b>13</b>	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	<b>27</b>	28	29	30		

**MAY 2009**

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	<b>25</b>	26	27	28	29	30
31						

**JUNE 2009**

Sun	Mon	Tue	We	Thu	Fri	Sat
	<b>1</b>	2	3	4	5	6
7	<b>8</b>	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

**JULY 2009**

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	<b>3</b>	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

**AUGUST 2009**

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

**SEPTEMBER 2009**

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5
6	<b>7</b>	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	<b>28</b>	29	30			

**OCTOBER 2009**

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	<b>12</b>	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

**NOVEMBER 2009**

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	<b>3</b>	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	<b>11</b>	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	<b>26</b>	27	28
29	30					

# Taxation continued...



Continued from Page 1...

The Internal Revenue Service has created a new comprehensive tax page which is designed for U.S.

citizens who reside abroad. This page contains basic tax information that Americans overseas need to know. It also includes links to more detailed topics such as the foreign earned income exclusion, foreign tax credit, reporting foreign bank accounts, Fulbright grants, state taxes, and a myriad of others. The site is

intended to provide answers to most tax questions for overseas citizens in one place so they don't have to navigate through the entire IRS website. The site also provides information on how to contact the IRS to get additional assistance.

<http://www.irs.gov/businesses/small/international/article/0,,id=97324,00.html>

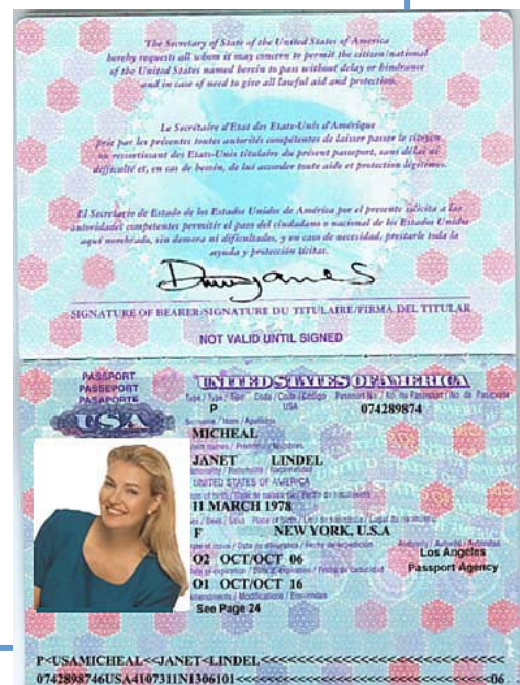


**These scams are commonly known as '419 Scams' as that's the section in the Penal Code that deal with these crimes...**

## Scampaigning to get rid of Scams!

Many people throughout the world, including American citizens in Australia, have fallen victim to various internet financial scams. A large number of them originate from West Africa (especially Nigeria). The common principle of these scams is to get the victim to send cash (or other items of value) upfront after either establishing an internet romance with them or by promising them a large amount of money that they would receive later if they cooperate. In almost all cases, the criminals receive money using Western Union and MoneyGram, instant wire transfer services with which the recipient can't be traced once the money has been picked up. These services should never be used with people you only know by email or telephone, even romantic partners or "fiancés" whom you have never met in person! Typically, victims of the scam are promised a lottery win or a large sum of money sitting in a bank account or in a deposit box at a security company. These scammers will often use fake versions of passports to try to

'prove' their citizenship. (If in doubt, ask questions. Contact your nearest Consulate to verify whether the Passport is a fake). Often the storyline involves a family member of a former member of government of an African country, a ministerial official, an orphan or widow of a rich businessman, etc. Some emails include pictures of boxes stuffed with dollar bills, scans of fake passports, bank or government documents and pictures of supposedly the sender. Here is an example of a fake U.S. passport.





# Loud Shirt Day



Staff from the U.S. Consulate General in Sydney took a few hours to help out the Shepherd Centre in putting together packets for Loud Shirt Day.

Loud Shirt Day is a day where employees are encouraged to wear loud, brightly colored shirts that

would be inappropriate for a normal work day to raise awareness for hearing impaired children. Their motto, “get deaf kids talking”, is the motivation behind their work.

A team of 12 staff members from the Consular section helped by cutting up thousands of stickers and folding hundreds of folders over a three hour period. Upon arriving at the Shepherd Centre, staff briefed participants about the Centre’s daily activities.

The Shepherd Centre provides hearing impaired children the potential to hear again without any cost to the family. They teach the children and parents

how to function with this disability and provide them with medical resources, such as a simple hearing aid or Cochlear Implant, to assist them. These services are provided at no cost to the family. They are 28% government funded. Remaining costs are funded through donations from sponsors and volunteers.

Loud Shirt Day is May 15<sup>th</sup> and encourages workers to give generously and wear a loud, bright shirt on May 15<sup>th</sup> to help bring awareness to this disability and to ‘get deaf kids talking’.

<http://www.loudshirtday.com.au/>



## Melbourne outreaches to your area...

The American Citizen Services Unit conducts periodic trips to Adelaide, Darwin, and Hobart to provide passport, registration, and other citizenship services that cannot be performed through the mail. We most recently conducted such visits to Adelaide in January 2009, providing over 100 services in a single day. As we have announced on our Web site and email, we plan to visit Adelaide

May 12 and Hobart May 19 to provide similar assistance. Please email us at [MelbourneACS@state.gov](mailto:MelbourneACS@state.gov) if you wish to see us during those visits. While we are committed to trying to provide this service on a quarterly basis, budgetary restrictions and other constraints may delay these visits. If you wish to register for notices of when a consular officer may be coming to

one of these towns for consular outreach, please email us at [MelbourneACS@state.gov](mailto:MelbourneACS@state.gov). The visits are also advertised on our Web site, <http://usembassy-australia.state.gov>.



## American Citizens Services' Fees

All U.S. consular fees worldwide are established in U.S. dollars (USD). For common consular services, the U.S. Embassy in Canberra provides an official exchange rate to calculate an Australian dollar (AUD) equivalent. As a result of the recent fluctuation in the Australian dollar, the U.S. Embassy in Canberra has recently required several adjustments to the official exchange rate to the Australian dollar. Future adjustments to the official exchange rate are anticipated, but, unfortunately, cannot be determined in advance.

Payments made or received in Australian dollars are subject to the current official exchange rate. We do not accept payments for the incorrect amount. Incorrect payments will be returned and new payments will be requested. Note, the new payment requested is also subject to the current official exchange rate, which could possibly

change after we request a new payment amount. Payments which exceed the fee for service cannot be accepted.

Payments received in U.S. dollars are not affected. Therefore, we encourage all payments received to be made in U.S. dollars. This may avoid delays in the processing of requested services. Acceptable forms of payment are bank checks or money orders (personal and company checks are not accepted). Please be advised that the larger Australia Post outlets offer Western Union Money Orders in U.S. dollars. Or, you may contact a local banking institution to inquire if they are able to issue a bank check in U.S. dollars.

**The Consulates General do not, under any circumstances, accept cash sent through the mail.**

**See you next edition**



### The U.S. Mission in Australia Contact Information

#### U.S. Embassy Canberra

American Embassy  
Moonah Place  
Yarralumla, ACT 2600  
(02) 6214-5600  
Web <http://canberra.usembassy.gov/>



#### Consulate General of the United States Sydney

For residents of ACT, New South Wales and Queensland  
Level 59, MLC Centre  
19-29 Martin Place  
Sydney, NSW 2000  
Ph: (02) 9373-9200  
<http://sydney.usconsulate.gov/>

#### Consulate General of the United States Melbourne

For residents of Victoria, South Australia, Tasmania and the Northern Territory  
553 St. Kilda Road  
Melbourne, VIC 3004  
Ph: (03) 9526-5900  
<http://melbourne.usconsulate.gov/>

#### Consulate General of the United States Perth

For residents of Western Australia  
4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
16 St. George's Terrace  
Perth, WA 6000  
Ph: (08) 9202 1224  
<http://perth.usconsulate.gov/>